



CHAPTER I.

A Messenger From the North.

I stood alone on the banks of a small stream gazing down into the clear water, my thought centering upon the journey homeward, when the bushes opposite parted, and a man stood on the bank scarcely a dozen steps away, with only the stream between us. It was time and place for caution, for suspicion of strangers, and my rifle came forward in instant readiness, my heart throbbing with startled surprise. He held up both hands, his own weapon resting on the ground. "Not so careless, boy," he called across cheerfully. "There is no war, so far as I know, between white men." His easy tone, as well as his words, jarred on me, yet I lowered the rifle. "I am no boy," I retorted, "as you may discover before we are through our acquaintance."

"No? Well by my eyesight you look it, although in faith you are surely big enough for a grown man. Yours is the first white face I've seen since I left the Shawnee towns—a weary journey."

"The Shawnee towns!" I echoed, staring at him in fresh wonderment. "You come from beyond? From the Illinois?"

He stroked his beard. "A longer journey than that even," he acknowledged slowly. "I am from Sandusky, by way of Vincennes."

"Alone?"

"The Indians who were with me remained at Shawnee; they lost heart. Since then I have been by myself."

"Come over," I said shortly, "where we can converse more easily."

He stepped into the cool water unhesitatingly, and waded across, a small pack at his back, and a long rifle across his shoulder. There was a reckless audacity about the fellow I could not fail to observe, and, as he scrambled up the rather steep bank, I had a glimpse of a face far from my liking. However, ours was a rough life in those days, acquainting us to strange acquaintances, so I waited, my rifle in my hand, determined to know more of this wanderer. He was a man of middle age, with gray hairs a plenty, and scraggly beard, an active body, of good girth, and a dark face, deeply seamed, having an ugly scar adown his right cheek, seemingly from its white center the slash of a knife. The eyes, gleaming beneath the brim of his hat, were furtive, uncanny, black as to color, and bold enough in the sneaking way of a tiger cat. Beyond these things there was little distinctive about the man, his dress merely that of the backwoods—fringed hunting shirt and leggings of leather, dirty and soiled by long use, yet exhibiting a bit of foppery in decoration which made me recall the French voyageurs of the north and their gay ribbons. At his belt dangled hunting knife and tomahawk, but these, with the rifle, constituted his whole display of weapons. Even before he had obtained the level on which I stood I had conceived a dislike for the fellow, a desire to have done with further acquaintance. With feet planted firmly on the edge of the grass he scanned me from head to foot with unwinking eyes, that sought vainly to smile.

"You are surely a big fellow," he said at last. "Some hand at rough and tumble, I make bold to guess. Let us have frankness between us. I come from the north on a mission of peace, the representative of the tribes, and of Hamilton. All I ask is fair speech, and guidance."

"You represent Hamilton, you say?"

"Aye, though I expect little will come from it. I would have word with St. Clair and Harmer. Know you either man?"

"Both, passing well. St. Clair is up the river—or was three days since—but General Harmer represents him at the settlement. How happens it, my friend, if the message be so important, Hamilton did not dispatch an officer?"

"He had no choice. None volunteered for the task, and I was the selection of the tribes. You question me as though you were Harmer himself; and more, you have the look of it. You're not a woodsman, you say; then I make a guess—you're a soldier."

"I am," I returned quietly, "an ensign in the regular service."

"Name?"

"Joseph Hayward of Fort Harmer."

"The gods be praised! Now is the way made clear. You were traveling thither?"

"I am to be there tomorrow."

"In ample time for my purpose. I recall your name, Master Hayward, as spoken by the Delawares. You were at Chillicothe last spring?"

The MAID of the FOREST

By RANDALL PARRISH
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"I attended the council."

"The very man, and now you can serve me well, if I may journey with you?"

"I am not overly fond of white men who turn Indian," I said coldly. "However I'll see you safe to the fort gates if you play no forest tricks on the way. And now you might tell me who it is I am to companion with."

He grinned, showing his teeth, and my eyes noted how firmly he held his gun.

"A pledge is a pledge, Master Hayward," he answered, insolently. "I am called Simon Girty."

I involuntarily took a step backward, staring into the man's face. That he was a renegade of some sort, I had realized from the first, yet it had never once occurred to me that he could be that bloody scoundrel, Girty. There flashed across my mind the stories I had heard of his atrocities: his leadership of Indians in midnight forays; his malignant cruelty; the heartlessness with which he watched victims burning at the stake; his outrages on helpless women and children; the fiendish acts of savagery with which his brutal name was connected along the border. And this was the man—this cowardly-eyed dastard, who stood there grinning into my face, evidently amused at my undisguised expression of horror. Protect, and guide him! My first inclination was to strike the man down in his tracks, kill him as I would a venomous snake. He read all this in my eyes, in the stiffening of my muscles.

"No, no, Master Hayward," he sneered, bringing his rifle forward. "Don't let the name frighten you. The half you've heard of me are lies. I'm not so bad when all is told, and there is more than one borderman who can recall my mercy. Kenton escaped the stake through me, and there are white women and children awaiting ransom in Detroit because I interceded for them. Now I play fair, above board—see?" and he dropped his gun on the grass, and held out his empty hands. "It is easy to kill me, yet you will not—you are a soldier."

I stood irresolute, hesitating, half tempted still to come to blows, yet his act disarmed me. Beast though he might be I could not kill him in cold blood; I was no murderer, yet it was a struggle to resist.

"Now listen, Simon Girty," I managed to say, at last. "There is no friendship between us, now nor at any time. I hold you a murderous renegade, a white savage, to be shown less mercy than an Indian dog. But I leave others to deal with you as you deserve. As you say, I am a soldier, and will act like one. I have pledged you my word of guidance to Fort Harmer. I will keep the pledge to the letter, but no more. Beyond the gate you proceed at your own risk, for I lift no hand to protect you from just vengeance. I despise you too much to fear you. Pick up your rifle. That is all: now we will break our fast and go."

Convinced as I was that Girty actually desired to reach the fort, although somewhat skeptical as to his purpose, I felt no fear of treachery. I was of too great value to the fellow to warrant an attack; so, without hesitation, I led the way, permitting him to follow or not, as he pleased. I had it in my mind to question him, but refrained. What would be the use? The fellow would only lie, in all probability, and one word would lead to another. He would have to be explicit enough once he confronted Harmer, and my duty merely consisted in delivering him safely at the gates of the fort.

It was noon when we came to the clearings, littered with stumps, but yielding view of the distant river, and the scattered log houses of Marietta. Men were at work in the fields, but I avoided these as much as possible, although they paused in their labor and stared suspiciously at us as we advanced. However I was well known, my size making me notable, and as our course was toward the town, no one objected to our progress. There was no recognition of the man, who clung close to my heels, and I wasted no time in getting past, eager to be well rid of him.

In truth I felt little hope of getting through thus easily. The fellow was too widely known not to be recognized by some one. These men of the fields were settlers, newly arrived mostly, and slightly acquainted as yet with border history, but there would be idle hunters in the village, backwoodsmen from across the river, men who had ranged the northern forests, and to whom the name of Girty meant much. Let one of these look upon the man and his life would scarce be worth the snap of a finger. Not that I cared,

except as his safe passage involved my own word.

"Come along," I said harshly. "I would be done with you."

We advanced up the road to where the fort gates stood open, a single sentry standing motionless between the posts. As we drew near, a group of hunters—a half dozen maybe—suddenly emerged, their long rifles trailing, on their way to the valley. I recognized the man in advance as the Kentuckian Brady, frontiersman and Indian fighter, and recognizing me he stopped.

"Ah, back again, Master Hayward," he exclaimed good humoredly. "But what is it you have here? No settler of this valley, to my remembrance."

He stared at my companion, shading his eyes with one hand, his face losing its look of cheerfulness.

"Indian trappings—hey!" he exclaimed. "Some northwest renegade! Stop! I've seen that face before!" His rifle came forward swiftly, as the truth burst upon him. "Curse you, you're Simon Girty!"

I gripped the barrel of his gun, pressing my way between him and the others behind.

"Whatever his name," I said sternly, "this is not your affair. The fellow comes with message from Hamilton, and has my pledge of safe guidance. Stand back now, and let us pass!"

"I'll not stand back," he said wrestling to break my grip on his rifle. "Not to let that devil go free. Let go of the gun barrel, you young fool! I'm not one of your soldiers. Here Potter, Evans, do you hear? That is the bloody villain Girty—come on!"

They had held of me instantly hurling me back in spite of my struggling. I saw the renegade throw forward his rifle, and shouted to him.

"Don't do that, you fool—run!"

Even as I cried out the order I leaped forward, seeking to get grip on Brady, hurling the others aside with a sweep of my arms. There was an instant of fierce fighting, of blows, curses, threats. I lunged over the rifle barrel, and got grip on Brady's beard, only to be hauled back by a dozen hands, and flung to my knees.

"Sentry! Call the guard!"

I got the words out somehow, boring my way forth from under the huddle of forms. There was a rush of feet, the shouting of an order, the shock of contact, and then I stood alone, wiping the perspiration from my eyes.

CHAPTER II.

With General Harmer.

"That will do, sergeant," I called out, the moment I could gain breath. "Here now, don't hit that man! Surround this fellow and take him inside the stockade. Never mind me; I'll take care of myself."

The little squad tramped off, Girty in their midst, his head turned back over his shoulder watchfully. I stepped forward fronting Brady, and held out my hand.

"Sorry this happened," I said soberly, "but I promised to bring the man to the fort, and I had to defend him."

"He's a bloody savage!" he retorted, with an oath, and making no responsive movement; "he's worse than any Indian on the border."

"I know all that, Brady. I despise the fellow as much as any of you, although I may not have suffered through his acts as some of you have. But he is here in peace, not war. To injure him now might cost hundreds of lives. Let him give his message to General Harmer; after that we shall know how to deal with the skunk. At least do not hold this against me; I only did my duty."

Brady loosened his grip on his gun, and took my hand.

"I understand that, boy," he said, not unkindly. "Your fighting was square enough, and no harm done. I like the way you went at it, but I reckon you don't quite sense how we old Kentuckians feel about renegades of that stripe. 'Taint natural you should, for there ain't been no Indian war to amount to anything since you come to this country. But I've seen that greasy devil in paint an' feathers; so has Evans here, an' these yer young fellows know some of the dirt he's done. He's led war parties against us, an' killed our neighbors. That skunk stood by an' let 'em burn of man Roddy at the stake, an' never raised a hand. It's a hellish fact, true, sir! An' he only laughed at Kenton when the redskins made him run the gauntlet. The ugly cur ought to be skinned alive!"

"I've heard all that," I replied when he stopped, his eyes blazing angrily. "But two wrongs never made a right, men. He came here voluntarily as a

messenger. The tribes are in council at Sandusky and sent him. That is why I stood in his defense against you. We must learn what word he brings. If he were killed on such a mission every Indian in the northwest would feel called upon to avenge his death. It would mean raids and warfare the whole length of the Ohio; it would mean the murder of women and children; the burning of homes, and all the horrors of Indian warfare for years to come. There is only a fringe of white settlers on this side of the river, Brady, and a mere handful of soldiers to defend them. We cannot afford to have war, we are not ready."

"Ready? rot! I am for going in now, an' finishing the job. This new government policy of strokin' those devils on the back, makes me sick. That ain't the way we cleaned up Kentucky."

"Easier said than done, Brady. This isn't Kentucky, and the conditions are different. Those were hunters and backwoodsmen who took possession of that land to the south. They came alone, on foot, rifle in hand, fighting men every one. That was their trade. These settlers who have come in north of the Ohio are of a different breed; they have brought wives and children with them, and have come to till the land. They are not hunters and woodsmen; half of them never even saw an Indian. They would be as helpless as babes on a war trail. St. Clair and Harmer are doing the best they can under such conditions. They have got to compromise; they don't dare provoke war. The Indians and the British know this is true; Girty knows it, or he never would have ventured to come in here—what is it, Faulkner?"

The sergeant, a short, stocky fellow saluted stiffly.

"The compliments of General Harmer, sir, and would you come to his office."

"Very well, sergeant, as soon as I can slip out of these hunting clothes. Am I right, Brady?"

"Maybe so," he admitted reluctantly, "but that ain't my style o' handling boys, till we see what's comin' out o' this yer message bearin'. I'd sure like to be in any fracas whar I could get a slam at that hound o' hell."

It required but a few moments for me to shift my hunting suit for a suitable uniform, and this accomplished, I hurried across the parade to the office. The orderly admitted me at once. General Harmer was alone, sitting beside a small writing table, and began questioning me the instant I appeared.

"Close the door, Mr. Hayward. Now, sir, what is it that just happened outside the gate? Fighting with some of my scouts, I understand, over a fellow you brought in with you? I presume there was some cause for this unseemly quarrel?"

"There was, General Harmer," I replied, standing cap in hand.

He leaned back in his chair, drumming with one hand on the table, his stern eyes on my face.

"Then make your report, sir."

I went over the events of the past few hours rapidly, but clearly, and there was no interruption until I ceased to speak.

"Who did you say the man was?"

"Simon Girty, sir. That was the name he gave me, and Brady recognized him at once."

"What is his mission? Did he say?"

"Not a word, sir, except that he represented the tribes, and bore a message from Hamilton."

"Think you he lied? Is his purpose to learn our strength and position?"

"No, sir, I think not," I replied soberly. "There was no necessity; beyond doubt they know that already. I do not think the fellow would dare come other than he said: he is not of that breed."

He walked back and forth across the room, his hands clasped, his head bent in thought. He was a florid-faced, heavily-built man, his step heavy on the punchon floor. Facing the door, he stopped with sudden decision.

"Orderly," he called, "have the sergeant of the guard bring the messenger here at once. Search him for weapons first."

He turned toward me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Useful at the Races.

"Why did you pick Alpha to win that race? I never thought he would win."

"Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet. I figured that Alpha should naturally lead."

"See what it is to have an education!"

"NERVE" MATCHED HIS PLAY

Golfer's Remarkable Luck Almost Equaled the Remark With Which He Followed It.

A member of the Washington American league team, who had always pretended to regard golf as a game for old men and crippled women, was persuaded to try his luck at the sport. Almost the whole club went to the first tee to see him drive off.

"What have I got to do, caddie?" he asked of the boy who went with him.

"You drive off from here," said the caddie, pointing to the tee, "and you're to put the ball in that little hole with the flag flying above it. I'll go on and mark your ball."

The caddie did so, and the ball player, with proper deliberation, drove off. By an extraordinary stroke of luck he drove a beautiful ball, which landed just on the edge of the green, and slowly trickled down into the hole. The caddie, wild with excitement, came dashing back, shouting: "You're down in one—the ball's in the hole!"

"Well," said the novice, nonchalantly, "I'm glad to have it. At first I was afraid I might have missed it."

NOT NAMED HERE

made its author famous and earned a great fortune. William A. Pinkerton, chief of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, says it is the greatest detective story he ever read. Soon this story will be printed in THE GREAT DIVIDE, 205 Post Building, Denver, Colorado. Send a stamp for sample copy. Write today—also say where you read this.—Adv.

Natural Proceeding.

"What do you suppose Smith will do with his windfall?"

"He'll blow it in."

Not the First.

Apropos of a millionaire of fifty-five who had divorced his wife after 30 years of happy wedlock in order to marry a chorus girl of eighteen, Mrs. Harvey W. Wiley, the brilliant suffrage worker, said with no little bitterness:

"He is not the first man to use his wife as a ladder and then kick the ladder away."

What New Friends Do to Us.

David Grayson, author of "Adventures in Contentment," beginning his new novel, "Hempfield," in the American Magazine, says:

"When we let new friends into our lives we become permanently enlarged and marvel that we could ever have lived in a smaller world."

Anything to Oblige.

Officer filling in form—What's your religion?

Zealous Reconvert—Well, what are you short of?

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"No, but my hair did."

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Of falling hair get Cuticura. It works wonders. Touch spots of dandruff and itching with Cuticura Ointment, and follow next morning with a hot shampoo of Cuticura Soap. This at once arrests falling hair and promotes hair growth. For free sample each with 32-p. Skin Book, address post card: Cuticura, Dept. X, Boston. Sold everywhere.—Adv.

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Just Ken. comfort. Write for Book of the Eye
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